

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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R 130500Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9828
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 4346

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, YE, ET, FT, YS
SUBJECT: RECENT BAB AL-MANDAB OVERFLIGHTS

REF: SANA 4220

1. DURING DEC. 8 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI I INQUIRED ABOUT RECENT OVERFLIGHTS OF BAB AL-MANDAB BY UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT, ASKING IF THE YARG HAS YET ASCERTAINED THE NATIONALITY OF THE PLANES INVOLVED. AL-HAMDI REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE. I TOLD HIM THAT I UNDERSTOOD THE YARG BELIEVES THE PLANES WERE FROM ETHIOPIA AND WONDERED IF THE MANUFACTURE OF THE BOMBS WHICH HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN DROPPED ON YEMENI POSITIONS HAD YET BEEN ESTABLISHED. AL-HAMDI AGAIN REPLIED NEGATIVELY BUT PROMISED TO INFORM ME IMMEDIATELY ONCE THE CURRENT YARG INVESTIGATIONS ARE COMPLETED.

2. IN A SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION ON DECEMBER 11 WITH MINISTER OF STATE AHMAD ABDU SAID, RECENTLY RETURNED FROM ADEN, HE TOLD ME THAT THE PDRY GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT THE PLANES WERE FRENCH, OPERATING OUT OF DJIBOUTI. SAID ALSO TOLD ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN THREE OVERFLIGHTS
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OVER A PERIOD OF A WEEK AND THAT PDRY GROUND FORCES

ALSO FIRED ON THE PLANES AS DID THEIR NORTHERN BROTHERS.

3. COMMENT: THERE IS WIDESPREAD FEELING HERE AMONG

THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY THAT THE YARG HAS EXAGGERATED
THIS INCIDENT TO PERUSADE THE SAUDIS OF YEMENI NEED
FOR MORE ADVANCED AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT ESPECIALLY MORE
SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT. THE FACT THAT THE SAUDIS WENT
ON FULL ALERT, PRESUMABLY IN RESPONSE TO THESE OVER-
FLIGHTS, MIGHT INDICATE THAT THE YEMENIS MAY GET MORE
SYMPATHETIC HEARING IN RIYADH THAN HAS HITERTO BEEN
THE CASE.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

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